



Chief Editor: Elsie Davis

November-December 2014



RD's Corner

Accomplishing *Conservation Southern Style* was top-of-mind for those of us representing the Southeast Region at the

68th annual meeting of the members of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) in late October. We joined our partners from 15 southeastern states (including Texas and Oklahoma), Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands to dialogue about how best to work together and learn from one another as we take on today's unique conservation challenges. We place high value on our SEAFWA partners. There is an old African proverb that says, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." Our goal in working with states is to go as far as we can go in our shared mission of working with others to conserve, protect and enhance the fish, plants, and wildlife resources and the wild lands and waters of the southeastern United States and beyond for the benefit of the American people. Collectively, we want to be the best that we can be at what we do. The resources we all cherish and the American public we serve deserve nothing less from us.

In the Service's Southeast Region, *Conservation Southern Style* embodies some very specific principles that we are putting into practice. It recognizes that to "go far" in positively affecting the future of America's wildlife and plants, and wild places, we must also focus significant energy on partnering with private landowners, industry representatives and others in the

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Jake the Rogue Turkey

By Jim Lyon, Merritt Island NWR

Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge shares its boundaries with NASA's Kennedy Space Center. Biologists at the refuge frequently respond to calls from Kennedy Space Center employees to relocate wildlife that has run afoul of their operations. It is not unusual for refuge biologists to wrangle alligators, capture snakes, or remove birds that have found their way inside facilities.

Earlier in the year, refuge staff started receiving complaints from Kennedy Space Center employees about a young turkey that was chasing cars and routinely blocking traffic. On several occasions, Biologists Steven Trull or I had responded to the complaints; but, invariably the turkey, nicknamed Jake by Kennedy Space Center employees, evaded capture.

One morning Steven got a frantic call. Jake had entered a security guard shack, causing the armed guards to hastily bail out, leaving Jake locked inside. Steven and Jim responded, finding the flustered guards looking back inside their shack, while Jake flew about, depositing copious amounts of droppings on the floor, desks, and chairs. Now that Jake was trapped inside, Steven and I knew we would get our bird.

Steven and I entered the shack, quickly cornering Jake. Steven, braving a flurry of beating wings, finally apprehended the suspect.

We drove Jake to the north of the refuge, far from NASA's rockets and launch facilities. As we drove to the release site, Steven and I saw a flock of hen turkeys ahead. Stopping, we quickly unloaded Jake, who, it would seem, finally discovered what he was really looking for; as he has not chased a car since. ♦



photo: ©Frank Robb, 2014



Jim releases Jake in more appropriate habitat. photo, Steven Trull, photo: USFWS

RD's Corner continued...

landscape who are willing to take voluntary actions to conserve fish and wildlife. Across the Region, we are using innovative tools and approaches that take into account the needs and values of landowners and protect their interests while providing conservation incentives.

We unveiled our ideas for carrying out *Conservation Southern Style* to our SEAFWA partners under our catchphrase, *All Lands, All Hands, All Wildlife* (www.fws.gov/southeast/initiatives/). It embodies our vision that through **voluntary** collaboration with private landowners and our traditional partners, we can keep working lands working and, at the same time, conserve fish and wildlife for present and future generations. Our approach makes both sense and “cents”: The majority of lands in the Southeast are privately owned. If we are going to turn things around for the record number of more than 400 fish, wildlife, and plant species that the Southeast Region must evaluate for possible Federal listing over the next decade, it will definitely involve the willing participation of private landowners. We know from the success in partnering to conserve the gopher tortoise, 80 percent of whose populations are found on private lands, that this is a winning, 21st century conservation approach.

From the “cents” standpoint, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico made it crystal clear that conserving our natural resources is vital to our nation’s economic health. Large businesses and industries, as well as small mom-n-pop enterprises, took a huge hit when the resources of the Gulf were swimming in oil. The impacts will be felt for decades. Today, the Southeast Region is playing a leadership role in working with public and private partners to restore the Gulf to health. Our Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration program and our National Wildlife Refuges and Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) along the Gulf are some of the key players in assessing the scope of the damage, developing the science upon which to base restoration plans, and implementing and monitoring actions to bring back the Gulf.

When it comes to this critically important region, we are also working with a host of partners in anticipating the impacts that lie ahead for Gulf coastal ecosystems and species from climate change, sea level rise, and land use changes. Our goal is to enhance our collective conservation and restoration planning and implementation. A key step in this effort is the Gulf Coast Vulnerability Assessment (GCVA) that is being carried out by the Gulf of

Mexico Alliance, NOAA, four Landscape Conservation Cooperatives along the Gulf, and a network of other public and private partners. Through this assessment, we are evaluating the vulnerability of mangroves, barrier islands, oyster reefs, tidal emergent marshes, and species associated with each habitat across the northern U.S. Gulf of Mexico. The results will be developed into a working document to be used in the creation of strategies for prioritizing and responding to present and future threats. You can learn more about the GCVA by visiting the Peninsular Florida LCC website at <http://peninsularfloridalcc.org/group/gulf-coast-vulnerability-assessment>.

Conservation Southern Style is going strong, and you, the employees of the Southeast Region, are its champions. You are out there every day building the necessary partnerships and implementing innovative approaches that are needed to solve today’s conservation challenges. The depth and breadth of what you are accomplishing can’t be captured in words, but it is being seen on the ground, where it matters most. It is providing a way forward through complex problems and offering hope and a future for wildlife. I thank you for your conservation efforts and I am proud and honored to be a part of it. ❖

- Cindy

Employee Spotlight

Employee of the Month: Kevin Lowry

By Elsie Davis, External Affairs



Kevin Lowry presents a Pioneer Festival plaque to City of Sebastian Mayor Bob McPartlan. photo: Garry Tucker; USFWS

Kevin Lowry joins Visitor Services and Outreach in the Southeast Regional Office this month.

Lowry holds a bachelor’s degree in wildlife management from the State University of New York at Cobleskill. Additionally, Kevin earned a master’s degree in environmental education and interpretation from Cortland State University, also in New York.

For the past four years, he was the Visitor Services Manager for the Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge Complex in Vero Beach, Florida. Lowry began his Service career in 2000 as a biological science intern at Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey. Since then, Kevin has been stationed at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge in New York, Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge in Massachusetts,

Middle Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge in Illinois, and Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin.

In November 2014, Kevin traveled to Denver, Colorado, to receive the Service’s Sense of Wonder award to honor his work in designing and implementing a unique environmental educational program that encourages people to visit national wildlife refuges.

For example, Kevin created the inaugural Pioneer Festival, a new event for Pelican Island, celebrating the 150th birthday of Paul Kroegel, the refuge’s first manager.

“My goal for the Pioneer Festival was to give visitors an opportunity to step back in time while experiencing the authentic sights, aromas, and flavors of the pioneer days,” Kevin said. “Visitors could pull up a rocking chair for story time with Paul

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Kroegel's granddaughter, or they could cast a net in the most biological diverse estuary in North America."

The festival also featured duck decoy carvers, bee keepers, wool spinners, and boat builders. Kevin even contacted a journalist from Kroegel's hometown of Chemitz, Germany, to let Europe know about the story of Kroegel's conservation legacy at Pelican Island.

While at Pelican Island, Kevin also recruited, and trained new volunteers who now work daily or weekly at the refuge. He also worked with the Boys Club and the Girls Club to provide them with educational programs.

Kevin is a self-taught drummer, who says he enjoys anything with difficult rhythmic beats. He is teaching himself to play the Irish tin whistle in preparation for playing bagpipes. He enjoys spending time with his wife, Autumn, and their dog Brewski. He also goes survival camping and plays every sport possible. ❖

What's Trending

By Katherine Taylor, External Affairs



Apps: This app will have you seeing stars...literally. Star Walk is a stargazing app that follows your every movement

in real-time and allows you to explore over 200,000 celestial bodies with extensive information about stars and constellations. The app features a scale time machine to explore the map of the night sky of tomorrow or years ago, as well as an Augmented Reality feature.



photo: Masa Ushioda

#MostSharedStory: For November's Manatee Awareness Month we shared a photo of a manatee with facts about their diet that was shared 748 times on Facebook, reaching 110,000 followers!

Social Media: We had our first ever, social media Critter Costume Contest for Halloween. Our folks from the field dressed up and submitted their photos, which followers voted for by clicking "like." In first place, and the winner of this year's Critter Costume Contest, was Jennifer Valentine of Cabo Rojo and Laguna Cartagena National Wildlife Refuges as a bee! In second place, from Panama City Field Office was Sandra Pursifull as a clam. And in third place, also from Cabo Rojo and Laguna Cartagena National Wildlife Refuge, was Carmen Matos as a fox.

Culture: What's the Buzz? Buzzfeed "listicles." These lists that feature short descriptions and photos are taking over the Internet. Who hasn't something like "Top 10 Places to Get Coffee?" Well, be on the lookout because our social media accounts will be featuring more of these, FWS style! ❖

Follow the Leader

Kevin Reynolds

By Nanciann Regalado, NRDA

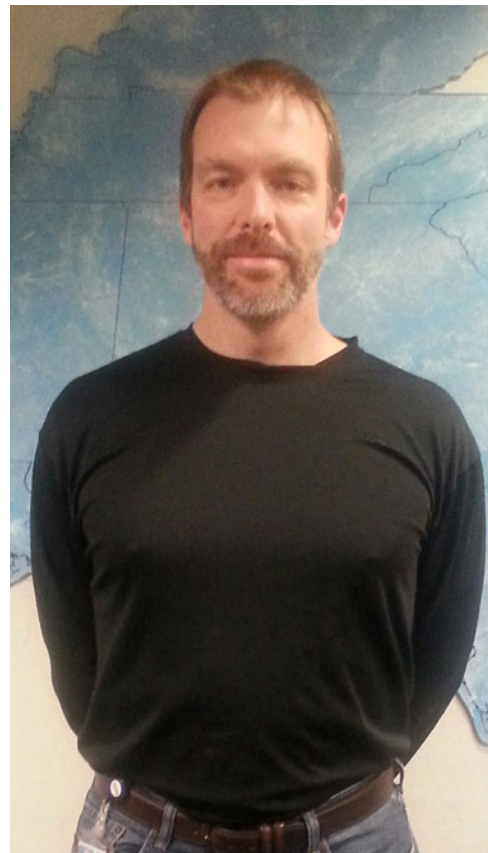


photo: Deborah Warren, NRDA

Kevin, would you tell us a little about your background – did you do before becoming the Case Manager of the Deepwater Horizon NRDA? How long have you been with the Fish and Wildlife Service?

I have been with the Service for 10 years. Before working for the Service, I was a student for a long time. I earned a B.A. in Neuroscience from Hamilton College in New York, and then a Masters and Ph.D. in Environmental Toxicology from Clemson and Texas Tech University, respectively. I pretty much spent my entire 20's in school, and did not get my first "real" or "adult-job" until my early thirties. That first job was with the Service as a contaminant specialist in an Arizona Ecological Services field office. Before joining the Deepwater Horizon Case Team, I served as the national Damage Assessment and Spill Response Coordinator at Headquarters in Washington D.C.

So, what brought you to Region 4? I suspect it was the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, which caused job changes for a lot of people, and I'm not just thinking of Robert Dudley, the head of BP at the time of the spill, and the man who so famously said about his involvement in the spill response, "I want my life back."

Yes, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill changed many lives; mine included. I had just started working in DC as the NRDA and Spill Response Coordinator when the rig exploded. From that moment forward my DC job was dominated by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, so joining the Case Team full time down in Region 4 was a natural progression.

I think lots of Region 4 folks are interested in the NRDA effort. Would you tell us a little bit about your job, please?

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As the Department's Case Manager for the Deepwater Horizon NRDA, I provide leadership, direction, and coordination for the Department on all aspects of both assessment and restoration for this incredibly large and complex damage assessment. We're what I would consider a "non-traditional" program within the Service because we were created in 2010 in direct response to the oil spill. All of our employees are focused on quantifying the injury to our Gulf trust resources resulting from the spill and then planning and implementing the appropriate restoration. Structurally, we are very similar to other programs. We have Regional Office employees with direct line supervision to our field office located in Fairhope, Alabama, where the majority of the injury assessment and restoration planning work is accomplished. I love my job and I love our team! We're doing great work on a daily basis and we have already accomplished some amazing restoration in the Gulf of Mexico.

What do you think is the most critical aspect of your job?

One thing continually rises to the top: clear communication. Communicating effectively both up and down the chain of command is essential to our progress and success on this case. If our staff is not completely clear on our objectives and goals for this case in any given week, then that is on me. That is my fault. That means that I have not been explicit enough, either verbally or in writing, about outlining the path we need to take or the place we need to go. That is not the same as micromanaging. Rarely do I tell our staff exactly how to get to where we need to go. I just tell them where we need to go and then get out of the way. We are blessed with great staff on this case.

What do you like most about your job?

One of the things I enjoy most about being the case manager is the influence I have in creating the climate my team operates within every day. I get to influence the environment everybody comes to work in every day. It really matters to me that everyone is having a good experience and everyone has the tools and information they need to do a good job. We are doing some amazing on-the-ground work for our natural resources and if everyone does not believe that, then that bothers me and

I at least want to know why. To succeed at this I have to make sure I am in tune with the chemistry of everyone working on this case. My senior staff helps me tremendously with this and together we make a great team.

Do you have any advice for aspiring leaders at the Fish and Wildlife Service who may be reading this?

Yes. Be ready. What do I mean by that? I mean that there will be moments in your 30-year career where there will be a unique opportunity served up to you on a silver platter. It may be the opportunity to lead; it may be a promotion; it may be a shot at your dream job. Whatever it is, these opportunities do not come often but they do come along for each one of us at some point. Your job is to make sure you are in the best position possible to succeed when that opportunity knocks. How do you do that? There is no magic formula. You roll up your sleeves and do your best every day in your current position. You give real thought to your IDP each year; you try to achieve good scores on your EPAP. Maybe you find a mentor; maybe you do some extra reading or other training. The bottom is that you do not want to give someone else an excuse down the road to not give you that opportunity when it comes along. Do your best at your current position, and good things will happen. That has been my experience. ❖

GET TO KNOW AN OFFICE

The Florida/Caribbean Migratory Bird Field Office

By Jennifer Strickland, External Affairs



Cindy Fury, photo: USFWS

*Resee Collins,
photo: USFWS*

*Ulgonda Kirkpatrick,
photo: USFWS*

If you've ever worked on projects or issues involving migratory birds including bald and golden eagles in Florida or the Caribbean, then you've probably been in contact with the staff of the Florida/Caribbean Migratory Bird Field Office (FCFO): Cindy Fury, Resee Collins and Ulgonda Kirkpatrick. The trio helps to ensure the continued health, habitat and population viability of all migratory birds that are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act both within the region and across the country.

Even though they work in a "Field Office," these three don't actually have a physical office at all - they telework remotely from their homes across Florida.

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Cindy Fury is the FCFO's Project Leader and has been with the Service for 15 years working first in Ecological Services, then Refuges and now with the Migratory Birds. Located in Tallahassee, she is your resource for all issues related to migratory birds in Florida and the Caribbean. From funding projects, restoring habitat, or improving populations, Cindy is involved in numerous projects that further our regional priorities such as at-risk species and Gulf Restoration.

"I spend a lot of my time working in partnerships," she says. These partnerships take place both inside the agency with programs like Refuges and Ecological Services, as well as outside the agency with partners like the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. "We work together to ensure that species and habitats are protected. For example, I've been collaborating with Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge and outside partners to identify potential effects of a space port to listed species, namely birds, and how we could minimize or avoid those impacts." Cindy also attributes a lot of their success to the logistical support of their Administrative guru, Cathy Watkins, who also happens to work remotely from Arkansas.

The other two-thirds of the office's workforce is completely committed to bald and golden eagles. Resee Collins is the Southeast's Eagle and Rehabilitation Permit Coordinator, and Ulgonda Kirkpatrick is our Eagle Biologist. Resee is located in DeLand, Florida and Ulgonda works from Altamonte Springs near Orlando.

Ulgonda is your go-to-girl if you're in need of a biological opinion on bald or golden eagles. "You can contact me if you have any land-based technical assistance issues," she says. "I review projects for our region that Resee is working through the permitting side, and we work together to determine whether or not the project requires a permit." She's also particularly interested in golden eagles. "I'm working with our state and refuge partners to set up near baited trail cameras near carcasses so we can survey for goldens and other scavengers. Anyone interested in participating should hit me up!"

Resee, a veteran rehabilitator with Audubon, joined the Migratory Bird Program 11 years ago. She serves as a conduit of information between eagle

rehabilitation groups and the Service, informing them of updates to our application processes or policies, as well as ensuring the continued health of eagles and other species in various facilities. She also manages eagle rehabilitation, take and depredation permits in the southeast. "We issue more eagle permits in our region than anywhere else because we have lots of development and lots of people," she says.

When I asked what regional employees could be thinking about in 2015 to support our migratory bird work, Resee responded that the 100th anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty will be in 2016. A national and regional team has already been established to start the planning process. "Any ideas you have are welcome!"

Regardless of whether the Florida/Caribbean Migratory Bird Field Office has a physical location or not, one thing is for sure: this trio flocks together to accomplish conservation for our feathered friends. ❖

Bragging Rights

Maintenance Action Team completes several deferred projects

By Stan Zazado, Refuges

The Service's Southeast Region Maintenance Action Team (MAT) completed numerous deferred maintenance projects over the past 18 months. These projects range from road and levee rehabilitation projects to bridge demolition and bridge replacement projects.

The completion of these projects is vital to the success of the Region because it reduces the cost of the construction projects and therefore saves money. Participation in and completion of MAT projects also improves morale, provides training opportunities, and enhances operator techniques. The projects are completed by a cadre of Heavy Equipment Safety Instructors, who assume project manager roles and whose expertise is second to none. The teams are made up of Refuge and Fisheries staff members.

Some of our most recent successes:



Lacassine NWR Maintenance Action Team Project, photo: USFWS

The MAT at Lacassine NWR was responsible for rehabilitating two miles of a levee. They removed vegetation and raised the levee in elevation.

"The MAT did an outstanding job in the completion of this project," Don Brevelle, the project manager responsible for the completion of the project, stated.

Based on initial estimates, the MAT completed the project with a cost savings of \$244,625.



Catahoula NWR Maintenance Action Team Project, photo: USFWS

The MAT at Catahoula NWR was charged with removing two dilapidated bridges.

"Each MAT project has its own set of challenges to overcome and it's a good learning experience for everyone. We learned from each other," Tony Evans, the project manager responsible for the completion of the project said, "We learned different techniques relating to operating equipment and moving material, and made new friends along the way."

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Based on initial estimates, the MAT completed the project with a cost savings of \$40,000.



Pond Creek NWR, Maintenance Action Team Project, photo: USFWS

The MAT at Pond Creek NWR was charged with removing a dilapidated bridge and replacing it with a pre-cast box culvert. Staff members from the field station played a key role in the completion of this project, as well as refuge complex and Regional staff members. Based on initial estimates, the MAT completed the project with a cost savings of \$293,440.



Mountain Longleaf NWR, Maintenance Action Team Project, photo: USFWS

The MAT project completed at Mountain Longleaf NWR was responsible for clearing vegetation from the roadside as well as cleaning out the ditches on 1.7 miles of mountainous road. In addition, they also spread gravel, brought the road up to grade and created a fire break. Based on initial estimates, the MAT group completed the project with a cost savings of nearly \$157,152. ❖

Fourth Annual Florida Panther Festival a success

By Molly DuVall, Friends of the Florida Panther Refuge intern, and Jessica Sutt, Florida Panther NWR



Jessica Sutt teaches young festival goers how to distinguish between bobcats and Florida panther kittens, photo: Larry W. Richardson

On November 15, more than 2,300 visitors streamed past the welcome table at this year's Florida Panther Festival in Naples, Florida. The festival provides a family-friendly experience for learning about Florida panther conservation and how to co-exist with Florida wildlife.

Some of the highlights from this year's event included spirited performances from the Collier County Junior Drill Team, live music from Darrell House and Raiford Starke, Panther Prowl Outdoor Games, and Nature Detective Tours. Attendees also enjoyed wildlife talks by conservation specialists and an exotic pet amnesty adoption event. Local food vendors and more than 50 organizations with Florida panther-related activities participated in the event.

A special addition to this year's festival was a Rural Residents Meeting in the Living with Wildlife Pavilion. Following a Living with Panthers and Bears presentation by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, live demonstrations were given on how to minimize backyard wildlife conflicts. Also discussed were assistance programs for predator-resistant enclosure construction and panther-related livestock losses.

The Florida Panther Festival has continued to grow and reach more visitors each year thanks to the dedicated work of festival partners from the Service, Defenders of Wildlife, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida Gulf Coast University, Wings of Hope, National Park Service, Nature on Wheels, Audubon Society, and the CREW Land and Water Trust. Next year's Florida Panther Festival is planned for November 14, 2015. ❖



Wildlife Biologist Wade Gurley discusses camera trapping methods for tracking Florida panthers, photo: Jessica Sutt

Bangladesh delegation visits the Louisiana Ecological Services Office

By Darryl Clark, Louisiana Ecological Services Office

Seven scientists from Bangladesh with concentrations in climate change, forestry, fisheries, conservation, and renewable energy visited the Louisiana Ecological Services Office on October 7, 2014, to learn of the Service's work in achieving sustainable ecosystems in Louisiana in this era of climate change. Brad Rieck, David Walther, Darryl Clark, Kevin Roy, and Robert Dubois from the Ecological Services Office participated in the discussion. Darryl described Louisiana coastal resources, sea level rise, coastal land loss, and, coastal restoration projects, including; marsh restoration using dredged material, hydrologic restoration, sediment diversions, earthen terraces, and shoreline stabilization.

"We had an excellent trip to Lafayette where we met Fish and Wildlife Service colleagues in their Louisiana Ecological Services Office," Dr. Haseeb Irfanullah, the Bangladesh delegation leader, said. "We had great discussions, along with the presentation. We very much appreciate their time, knowledge, and work on the Louisiana coast."

Bangladesh is located in South Asia east of India and northeast of Burma. With more than 160 million people, it is the eighth most populated country in the world. It was formerly part of India, then East Pakistan, and gained independence in 1971. The Ganges delta, produced by the Ganges, Jamuna and Meghna rivers, is the largest in the world. Bangladesh is susceptible to climate change-caused sea level rise. Ten percent of the Bangladesh land mass will be inundated by a 3.28-foot rise in sea level. Most of the country's land elevation is below 39 feet in sea level; comparable to south Louisiana. The 1970 Bhola cyclone killed 500,000 people, and the 1991 cyclone killed 140,000 people. During the 1998 flood, 66 percent of the country flooded causing 30 million people to become homeless. Bangladesh has the largest mangrove forest coastal jungle in the world, the Sundarbans, with some of the most diverse wildlife in the world, including the Royal Bengal Tiger. ❖



Darryl Clark of the FWS Louisiana Ecological Services Office with members of the Bangladesh scientific delegation on their October 7, 2014, visit to Louisiana, photo: USFWS

Reconnecting the Ouachita River with its floodplain at Upper Ouachita National Wildlife Refuge

By Ken Clough, Upper Ouachita NWR



Barrs & Glawson property, photo: Ken Clough, USFWS

One of the largest floodplain restoration projects in the country is underway at Upper Ouachita National Wildlife Refuge in north Louisiana. The refuge, encompassing about 80,000 acres, is bisected by the Ouachita River. A 27,000-acre floodplain is located east of the river, but separated from it by a 17-mile levee built more than 30 years ago. In the late 1990s, the Service acquired the 16,000-acre Delta Rice property bringing much of the floodplain into refuge ownership.

Record high water levels on the Ouachita River in 2009 led to a levee

breach inundating the floodplain. Prior to this event, the Service had been working with The Nature Conservancy to restore the floodplain through mechanical levee breaches and has since breached the levee in additional locations. Land acquisition efforts continued, and in 2012, the 3,900-acre Mollicy property was acquired with the help of The Conservation Fund. Leading up to 2013, plans were developed in partnership with the Trust for Public Land to acquire the 7,400-acre Barrs & Glawson property. To date, 6,000 acres of that property has been acquired. The portions of these lands previously cleared for agriculture were reforested to restore the floodplain to bottomland hardwood forest.

Reconnecting the Ouachita River with its floodplain and restoring and protecting this area benefits hundreds of thousands of migratory birds and resident wildlife; creates new spawning areas for fish; and reduces downstream flooding of private lands and local communities. ❖



Students, teachers, and volunteers unite for diversity on Boneyard Beach, photo: M. Eliese Ronke

A trip Over the Horizon

By Patricia Midgett, Cape Romain NWR

How do you get teenagers from different sides of the economic spectrum to spend a day together chatting about everything from pelicans to plantations?

Take them on a trip Over the Horizon to Bulls Island.

Hosted by Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge, Over the Horizon brings together students from the Charleston area for a day of diversity, both biological and cultural, to connect students to their past, present, and future.

For the third year, 30 students from Burke and Wando high schools participated in Over the Horizon. Students learned the importance of the Lowcountry and of taking ownership of the land and its history.

The day began with a boat ride to Bulls Island guided by Chris Crolley and Gates Roll of Coastal Expeditions. Upon landing on Bulls, students toured the island, stopping at the foundation remains of the old fort and rice trunks and, spotting egrets, fox squirrels and alligators along the way.

Students lunched in the shade of live oaks before an afternoon in the historic Dominick House.

Sweetgrass basket sewer Vera Manigault taught students about sweetgrass basketry and modern Gullah-Geechee culture. Michael Allen of the National Park Service then discussed the history of the Gullah-Geechee corridor, speaking to the significance of the Lowcountry in making South Carolina a vital part of America yesterday and today.

“We live in a special, unique, sacred place,” Michael Allen said. “We have a duty to protect the diversity of life— plant, animal, and human alike— which makes the Lowcountry so special.”

The students of Over the Horizon have already taken the first steps in accepting that mantle. ♦

What do longleaf pinecones and snowmen have in common?

By David Caldwell, West Georgia Ecological Services Field Office



Ridgecrest Elementary Fourth Grade Science Club with Sandi Spivey (left bottom), Sandy Abbott (right bottom), and David Caldwell (upper right), photo: Vivian Doresky

A group of children from Ridgecrest Elementary, located in Alabama, found out. David Caldwell, Sandra Spivey, and Sandy Abbott from the West Georgia Ecological Services Field Office spent an afternoon talking about conifers. Children learned about the various types of conifers and the many functions one pinecone can perform. Following the talk, each child was able to use the pinecones they collected to make a unique winter decoration to take home. Hopefully this memento will be a continued reminder that not all things in nature are as simple as they seem. ❖

Enjoying canoe trips at Reelfoot Lake

By Tara Dowdy, Reelfoot Lake NWR

The still waters of Reelfoot Lake seem surreal in the mornings. Cypress trees tower over lily pads and cut grass. A muskrat quietly swims across the water. A great egret seems to shine as the morning sun reflects off its white feathers as it flies away. These were the scenes for visitors participating in Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge's guided canoe trips.

This year, Reelfoot offered a series of free guided canoe trips called Winding Through the Wetlands. Once a month from April through October, refuge staff members guided 20 to 30 paddlers through a variety of remote areas on the Grassy Island and Long Point units of the refuge. Eagles, white pelicans, snakes, turtles, herons, egrets, wood ducks, and blue-wing teal were some of the wildlife viewed on the trips.

The refuge has three established trails ranging from 1.5 miles to more than 5 miles in length and marked with trailblazers and interpretive signage. From the beginner to the avid canoeist, the trails are great for all levels. These trails showcase a variety of plants and wildlife and give participants a chance to



A peaceful canoe trip on Reelfoot Lake, photo: USFWS

view areas of Reelfoot Lake that they may not have seen otherwise. From open water, to narrow paths, to winding trails between beautiful bald cypress trees, Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge has a variety of areas to experience from a canoe or kayak.

This is the first year the refuge has offered guided trips on a monthly basis. Participation and feedback were better than expected, and plans are already being made for next year's tours. ❖



Visitors enjoy the guided canoe tours, photo: USFWS

Kelly Taylor visited by Director of Development for Georgia Southern University

*By Crystal Thomas, Chattahoochee Forest
National Fish Hatchery*

On October 22, Kelly Pope, Georgia Southern University Director of Development for the College of Science and Mathematics, visited Deputy Hatchery Manager Kelly Taylor at Chattahoochee Forest. Pope was in the area visiting Georgia Southern alumni. Taylor gave Pope a tour of the facility and talked with him about the changes that Georgia Southern has made since he was a student there. Taylor completed his Bachelor of Science in Fisheries Biology at Georgia Southern in 1992. ♦



L-R: Kelly Pope, Georgia Southern University Director of Development for the College of Science and Mathematics, with Kelly Taylor; photo: Crystal Thomas, USFWS

Friends and Volunteers

Loxahatchee alligator hunt in oil

*By Stephen Horowitz,
Loxahatchee*

For the fifth consecutive year the Friends of the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge in Boynton Beach, Florida, held a Loxahatchee Visions Art Contest and Exhibition. Situated in the northern Everglades, each entry must reflect a vision inspired by the unique flora and fauna of the region. This year, 31 works of art-using any medium or mixed media (except photography) were submitted. The judging by an outside professional art instructor was completed by October 18, the show was hung in the Visitor Center Theater, and an award reception was held the following weekend. The winning entries can be viewed at www.loxahatcheefriends.com.



Refuge? A painting by Karen Zuk Rosenblatt

Karen Zuk Rosenblatt, a well-known award winning local artist. You can view her work at www.karenzukrosenblatt.com. Karen submitted an oil painting entitled REFUGE? as her protest against the first ever U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recreational alligator hunt at Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge held several months ago. Project Leader Rolf Olson, got more than 1,000 alligator hunt applications for the 11 permits that were granted by random selection. Each permit holder could take only two gators. The hunters only were allowed on the southern 30,000 acres of the 143,954-acre Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge in the evening. This is the same area that is popular with fishermen and duck hunters (in season) during daylight hours.

Karen Zuk Rosenblatt, and others who protested the hunt, maintained that “hunting should not be allowed in a protected area for enjoying nature and wildlife.” ♦

Herons, Bobcats, Turtles, Alligators, Egrets, Raptors... AND Seeds!

*By The Marshall
Foundation*

The Marshall Foundation for the Everglades is one of the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuges three friends groups. The group develops, promotes, and delivers science-based education and public outreach programs central to restoration of the greater Everglades ecosystem and its historic



Harvesting cypress seeds, photo: The Marshall Foundation

River of Grass. In its 14th year, the Cypress Seed Harvest has become one of the Foundation's more popular events. Boy Scouts. Girl Scouts, families and friends, 150 in all, joined together to enjoy a perfect South Florida fall day on Saturday, October 25, 2014.

In addition to harvesting seeds and cleaning up the trails, everyone enjoyed the Enviroscope watershed pollution model and the animal artifacts Arthur R. Marshall Foundation is permitted to possess by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Guided tours of the Marsh Trail revealed a host of birds and animals including water moccasins, pileated woodpeckers, wading birds, and alligators. Participants helped the Marshall Foundation staff with Citizen Science surveys that count and log birds and butterflies that inform national research projects. Children also had the chance to create special environmental art and write letters to family members about their experiences.

Thanks to Dr. Tom Poulson for sharing his knowledge of the Everglades, to Boy and Girl Scout Troops and the Earth/Green Clubs from Palm Beach Central High, Oxbridge Academy, and H.L. Johnson Elementary School for their record turnout and to Trader Joe's of Delray Beach, Florida, for the donation of reusable shopping bags for gathering those precious cypress seeds. Check out <http://budburst.org/results> to see the results of the Marshall Foundation of the Everglades' work with cypress trees. ❖

What you didn't know about Terry Peacock

By Elsie Davis, External Affairs

Terry Peacock, refuge manager of St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge trains bird dogs. She rarely carries a gun and says that her husband Rodney is the hunter. Terry accompanies him on quail hunts to handle the dogs. Since there isn't much quail hunting in Florida, she uses pen-raised, tame birds on their own property to work the dogs. Rodney also hunts doves, deer, and feral pigs.

Terry and Rodney have six dogs – four of them are English Pointers that they use for quail hunting and one Yellow Lab

is used for dove hunting. The sixth dog is a mixed breed that they adopted when it showed up at their house.

Terry started training pointers 26 years ago when Terry and Rodney borrowed a Brittany Spaniel to go quail hunting. When Terry convinced Rodney they could go hunting any time, if they owned their own dog, they found their first puppy, a female, in Oklahoma City. Terry is on her fourth generation of that dog's offspring. Terry says she starts disciplining her dogs when they are six weeks old, and she teaches them all the basic commands, such as sit, stay, and come. She puts them on a long leash and trains them for field work soon after they learn the commands.

Terry does pointing dog demonstrations for her church's youth group and for interns who are working at the refuge. She also has done demonstrations for the refuge's Wildlife Heritage Outdoors festival.

"Since quail populations have declined nationwide, many hunters have not had the pleasure of seeing a pointing dog work," says Terry. "We love seeing the looks on young faces when they see our dogs go on point." ❖



Terry with her 12-year-old English Pointer named Spunky, photo: Betsy Kellenberger

What Do You Think?

Pick any holiday in the year. What is your favorite holiday memory?

Send your responses to <http://bit.ly/egritspoll>

If you have questions, please contact me at Elsie_Davis@fws.gov or 404/679 7107.

Thank you,

Elsie



Leadership Quote:

We should be taught not to wait for inspiration to start a thing. Action always generates inspiration.

Inspiration seldom generates action.

— Frank Tibolt